

A Correction To A Lady Of Poetry

"I think all life is a matter of luck --
good and bad." -- Diane Wakoski

any ballplayer can tell you, Diane:
in games like baseball where luck is a percentage factor,
even there it balances
out --

dribble one through the shortpatch for a single and
your next one
will be a line drive into the 2nd baseman's mitt.

in games unlike baseball
in games like life
one good man can survive while another dies
but this isn't luck
this is having the connection,
and the good man with the connection seldom remains
the good man -- he softens and
fails.

if you consider yourself lucky,
don't,
for whatever you've gained you've probably gained by
doing something a little differently or
with a little more magic than
somebody else.
and when the magic goes or
lessens, and it usually
does, and
when the poetry readings drop off
and the publishers stop inquiring as to your next
manuscript, you will then have to consider your luck
bad,
then you might start bitching about
the unfairness of the game
like some untalented scribblers
I know.

see the old ladies in the supermarkets
angry and lonely
pushing their carts --
that they were once given young bodies was not luck
or that they lost them was not,
or that they did not build a life on something firmer
was not.

I am for the survival of all people until
natural age takes
them. but they'll need more than luck, and a cunning
better than poetry.
it's hardly luck when the spidertakes a fly or bad luck
when the fly
enters the web.

I could go on
but I feel by now
I've made the point,
and as the people come home this evening
from the war
and sit at their tables to eat and
talk, and perhaps later
love
if they are not too tired,
don't tell them that all life is a matter of luck --
good and bad.
they know it's a matter of
doing or dying.
Hitler, Ty Cobb, the man at the vegetable stand --
they knew and know the workings.

save your fairy tales for the smaller
children. they'll learn the real story
soon enough.

A Warm Afternoon Just Off Sunset Boulevard

the fire engines swing out
and the clouds listen to Shostakovich
as a woman dumps a bucket of piss
into a row of geranium pots
and as the State readies for Revolution
I feed a cat
who has the soul of a band-aid
and one ear missing,
then I throw him out
go over in the corner and try to tune
my broken guitar
as somebody drives by out front
at 60 m.p.h. with his
hair
on fire. he's
running from the grave.
"damn you, Madame Bovary," I say
to the lady
sitting on the couch,
"you haven't given me a decent blowjob
in months."

she grins and wets her lips.

I put on symphony #2 by some Swede,
moderne.
the Madame takes out her teeth
and I throw myself upon the floor